

ROLE OF MONTFORTIAN ASSOCIATES IN ASIA-OCEANIA IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PHILIPPINES (ANA MARIE FESTIN FONDEVILLA)

Questions

1. What is the reality of Montfortian Associates in your entity: accompagnators, members (is there a register?), an organization for coordination, formation activities, mission activities, involvement of the Associates in formation and mission, cooperation of the Associates with the mission of the entity...

It was in April of 1984 that the Montfort Missionaries arrived in the Philippines.

In 1985, the Philippine Church celebrated the Marian Year. (2000th Birthday of Mary)

In 1986 Fr. Claude Sigouin, SMM and Fr Mario Belotti, SMM were invited by Marian leaders to share the Montfortian Spirituality to them.

15 women and men came to undergo the 33-day-preparation for Consecration to Jesus through Mary according to the teachings of St Louis Marie de Montfort (Montfortian Month, MM).

The process came to be known as the “Totus Tuus Journey” (TTJ).

It started in February 1986, almost the same month that we had the famous peaceful revolution or people power of EDSA. (Why EDSA: it happened at Epifanio Delos Santos Avenue, Quezon City).

Since 1986, there are more than 100 batches of the Totus Tuus Journey groups.

Of the almost 1,000 TTJers from these TTJ batches (1986-2022) almost 100 of them are registered as Montfortian Associates.

These AMM or Associates of Montfort Missionaries are TTJers who sincerely desire to actively participate and collaborate with the different mission and activities of the Montfort Missionaries.

They are found in the places where the Montfort Fathers are doing their mission: in Manila, Cebu, Bulacan and Dagupan.

The 1st enrollment/commitment to the Association of Mary Queen of All Hearts (AMQAH) was formally made on April 9, 2018 and was accepted by Fr General Luiz Augusto Stefani, SMM with Fr Rozario Menezes, SMM.

Yes, there is organization for coordination for mission and other activities. Our National

Director is Fr. Federick Yumang, SMM. AMQAH members are assigned to four different mission teams.

1. **Spirituality Team** (*in charge of forming new TTJ groups: from launching to Consecration Day, also in charge of on-going formation/deepening session for TTJ facilitators, in charge of disseminating the Jesus in Living in Mary Newsletter from Rome to TTJers and AMQAH Members*).
2. **Mission Team** (*in charge of the Catechism/feeding/outreach programs for typhoon victims, earthquake victims, and other calamities, Marian Youth Camp, Formation of Family and Life, etc*)
3. **Evangelization Team** (*in charge of Montfortian Pilgrimages, Montfortian Recollections, Marian Devotion Activities, Newsletter, etc*).

4. **Mary's Place** (in charge of the Center of Spirituality, promotion and selling of Montfort/Marian books, liturgy for every 1st Saturday Mass and activities and fellowship).

*Although members are divided into these teams, all members are enjoined to take part in all these activities because we are **working as one Montfortian family and we help and support one another.***

2. **Does it appear that most of the Montfortian confreres in your entity seem to have an interest and belief in the actuality of Montfort and the importance of spreading this spirituality within and with our Montfortian Associates?**

Yes, most of the Montfortian confreres in the Philippines have an interest and belief in the actuality of Montfort and the importance of spreading this spirituality within and with our Montfortian Associates.

Right from the very beginning when the Montfort Fathers gave the Totus Tuus Journey in 1986, it was their deep desire that eventually the Montfort Associates will give the Totus Tuus Journey in the coming years. Lay facilitators started giving the TTJ journey since 1990.

On a personal note, in 1987 after we had our TTJ Consecration (December 8, 1986), I was invited to go to Papua New Guinea with another TTJer (and a co-Legionary of Mary). There we worked as lay missionaries for two years at the Montfort Catholic Mission, with and among the SMMs, DWs and FSGs.

We set up three Legion of Mary Groups (in Boset, Diocese of Kiunga, Western Province) hoping that these Legionaries of Mary will be the ones to continue to spread the Montfortian Spirituality through the Legion of Mary among their people, of course with the guidance of the Montfort Missionaries.

What are some signs that they are interested or confident in it?

They are willing to share the mission of diffusing the Montfortian Spirituality with us who are Montfortian Associates.

Their invitation (through and with the Daughters of Wisdom) for us to work with them in Papua New Guinea as lay missionaries (1987-1989).

I was also invited by our 2 SMM Novice Masters to give the Love of Eternal Wisdom (LEW) sessions to 4 batches of SMM Novices in 2014-2017.

Last year I was requested by our National AMQAH Director to give the LEW session to TTJers via online (August to December 2021, 2x a month).

I thank Fr Rey and the Montfort Communications for extending to us the use of the zoom account from Rome for our online sessions from August to December 2021.

Do the Montfortian confreres work together or be involved in an accompaniment team for the sharing of Montfortian spirituality?

Yes, the Montfortian confreres work together and are involved in an accompaniment team for the sharing of the Montfortian spirituality.

As member of the Spirituality Team, we are tasked to give the Totus Tuus Journey and to look for weekly facilitators.

In the most recent TTJ that we just had (September 2021 to April 2022) we are happy to say that there were 6 SMM Frs, 1 SMM Scholastic, 1 DW, 5 Lay facilitators who took part in giving the weekly sessions. Recollection was given by 1 DW and the Holy Mass and Consecration was

officiated/celebrated by our National AMQAH Director.

Through and with our National Director, Fr Fed, we thank you our Montfort Missionaries for all the opportunities that came our way the past years to express our love for Our Blessed Mother and Our Lord Jesus through the works you have commissioned us with.

We thank you all for trusting and believing in us.

3. What are the challenges your entity faces in the field of sharing Montfortian spirituality with and with the Associates?

In the 36 years of the Totus Tuus Journey in the Philippines, 32 years of those TTJ years were spearheaded by dedicated lay facilitators with the guidance and support from the Montfort Fathers.

In these 32 years, the recent two years were more challenging than before because of the Covid -19 Pandemic, but then, life goes on and the mission must continue so almost all of our activities were online for the past two years, it is only recently (March 2022) that some of us were able to go to the Center for face to face Holy Mass and other activities.

For some of us, it is still difficult due to long distance traveling and health issues. The pandemic is far from over.

The challenge for us as AMQAH members is to invite other TTJers to take a deeper

plunge (Put Out into the Deep, Duc in Altum) become AMQAH members.

We are especially posing this challenge to the newly Consecrated TTJers.

Most of the older TTJers are already active in their own parishes as Legionaries of Mary and members of other parish organizations.

Nevertheless, we invite them to join us in the activities of the Center, such as:

- a. Monthly First Saturday Mass and Marian Devotions*
- b. Yearly Pilgrimages (around 38 Pilgrimages since 1986)*
- c. Advent, Lenten and Marian Recollections*
- d. Deepening Session for TTJers/AMQAH*

e. **Marian Exhibits**

a. *Inviting TTJers, family and friends to take part in Center's Mission: Gift-giving, Outreach Programs, Medical Missions, etc*

e. How can we in Asia and Oceania work together in this area: getting to know each other among our Associates, exchanging information in the field of formation and mission....

Can a regular meeting of the Associates, with a physical presence, be held?

Yes, it is possible.

Is it also possible to organize a regular online meeting of Montfortian Associates in Asia and Oceania?

This is already being done since last year not only with the Montfortian Associates but also with the rest of the Montfortian Family: SMMs, DWs, FSGs.

Thanks to the initiative which came from Bro John Albert, FSG of Singapore and well received and supported by the SMMs headed by Fr Arnold, SMM of the Commission on Spirituality.

How to ensure the sustainability of this initiative?

This initiative can be sustained through prayers, willingness, and commitment of all Montfortian Associates and the rest of the Montfortian Family: SMMs, DWs, FSGs.

*This is to live the Montfortian Spirituality in
Synodality.*